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UNCLAS BOGOTA 007332

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR PM/DTC

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INDUMIL'S SAFEGUARDS SUFFICIENT FOR ARMS AND MUNITIONS

REF: BOGOTA 004569

1. (U) Several U.S. companies have attempted to seek licenses from PM to sell defense articles to the Colombian Military (COLMIL) and Police this year and have been denied, possibly due to concerns about Colombia's end user controls. Military Industries (INDUMIL) is the Colombian government's only entity charged with the production, importation, and sale of arms and ammunition in Colombia, both for military and private use. Emboffs toured the INDUMIL manufacturing plant and met with Colonel Fidel Ricardo Velandia, Chief of the Arms Control Department to learn more about INDUMIL's controls. In addition, Post's Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) office maintains close contact with INDUMIL and noted that the following controls are in place to control military supply inventories:

- Munitions: Each piece of ammunition produced by INDUMIL is stamped with a lot number and recorded so that authorities may track or trace it later. INDUMIL imports and produces munitions for COLMIL and civilian use, but civilians must pass a rigorous security and background check before obtaining a weapon. Munitions sales are strictly limited and by law, Colombians can buy no more than 100 rounds of ammunition every six months and to do so must produce the appropriate firearms license.

- Small Ordnance: Each weapons component is stamped with a code and logged at every step of the assembly process so all arms originating at INDUMIL can be traced. INDUMIL's control branch maintains copious documents on all weapons imported and leased to private civilians. The Department of Arms Control oversees a background check of each individual interested in purchasing arms to ensure he or she does not have a criminal history. If the individual is deemed free of wrongdoing, the Department of Arms Control can issue a license to have a weapon or carry a weapon (two different licenses). Licenses to maintain a weapon at home must be renewed every 10 years, licenses to carry a weapon must be renewed every three years, and restricted-use weapons such as machine guns and those with more than nine rounds must be renewed every year. Colombian law states that only the government can produce or import arms; and all weapons, even those held and carried by private citizens, are legally property of the government and may be recalled at any time.

2. (U) Given these safeguards, Embassy believes the Colombian controls on munitions and small ordnance sales are adequate to warrant permit approvals for U.S. suppliers.

DRUCKER